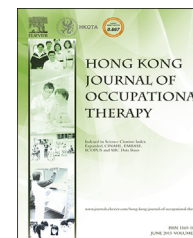


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## EDITORIAL

# Establishment of the Hong Kong College of Occupational Therapy



Specialization is not a new thing with medical practitioners. Occupational therapist (OT) specialization, although not legally accredited by the Occupational Therapists Board or under the ordinance of registration in Hong Kong, has been practised informally by members in the field for some years. It is estimated that 80% of occupational therapists in Hong Kong have obtained a postgraduate master degree in a specialized field. Having OT specialization is of value to the development of the profession as it promotes public recognition and accountability, advancement in professional standing, as well as career development of individuals in the profession.

On 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015, the first meeting of the Organization Committee of the Provisional Hong Kong College of Occupational Therapy (The College) was held at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. A group of experienced occupational therapists in the clinical and academic fields, led by the convener Ms. Stella Cheng, Vice-Chairperson of the Hong Kong Occupational Therapy Association (The Association), met and agreed on the formal establishment of The College under The Association. The terms of reference of The College include:

1. To establish a communication platform among occupational therapists with similar professional aspirations so as to facilitate research and development in different specialty areas;
2. To promote professional development of occupational therapy in different specialty areas by setting standards and organizing advanced specialty training;
3. To facilitate the public's access to information on registered occupational therapy specialists.

There is much preparation work ahead for this organizing group to do in order to establish The College

according to their preliminary work plan, including seeking legal advice for the constitution of formal establishment, and setting up colleges of at least eight specialty areas under The College: (a) children and adolescents; (b) mental health; (c) elderly; (d) medical rehabilitation; (e) musculoskeletal rehabilitation; (f) work disability management; (g) assistive technology; and (h) developmental disability. Other specialty areas may be added at a later date. The group will need to re-visit the core competencies of occupational therapists as a base for determining the criteria for listing as occupational therapy specialists, set preliminary criteria, and propose a framework for the formation of colleges in different specialty areas for members' consultation. A therapist can practice in more than one specialty. The criteria for a specialist within a particular specialty area will be determined by working groups comprised of invited occupational therapy experts in that area as coordinators and members. The criteria may include, but are not limited to, the following: education and training, work experience, research and publications, development of services, local/international presentations, student education/teaching/supervision experience, awards/grants received, patents obtained, and honorary positions.

Preparations for the establishment of The College are underway. Comments and views from members to The Association on this matter are most welcome.

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